

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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MEDITATION

Spirit Of Sonship

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Rom. 8:15, 16.

Blessed Spirit!

It is through Him, the *Parakleet*, the Comforter, whom the Lord had promised to send from the Father, and Whom He poured forth into His Church on the day of the firstfruits that we become heirs and partakers of all the blessings of salvation!

He it is that imparts unto us the fulness of Christ, and all His benefits!

Apart from Him we are children of wrath, and lie in the midst of death, incapable of laying hold on the Christ of God, the blessings of forgiveness, eternal righteousness, the adoption unto children, freedom from all condemnation, the everlasting love of God, eternal life and glory. For how could we possibly reach out for the Christ and His fulness? He must come to us. And in the Spirit He returned! He was with us for a little while, in our death, and in our misery. And while He was with us still, He took all our sicknesses and pains upon Himself, assumed the full burden of all our sins and iniquities and carried them all to the accursed tree, there to become obedient unto death, and to descend into lowest hell, that He might bring us to God. And He is no more with us. For He was raised from the dead. And He is exalted into the highest glory, at the right hand of the Majesty

in heaven, Lord of life and of death! And thither He must draw us. From thence He must reach out for us. For we cannot reach out for Him. And He did come, in the Spirit, to abide with us for ever, and to impart unto us Himself in all the riches of His grace!

And so, through that Spirit He lives in us.

And through the same Spirit we live by His grace.

And living by His grace, we do mortify the deeds of the body, realizing that we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh, but to the Spirit to live after Him.

And mortifying the deeds of the body, we know that we are the sons of God, children that are led by the Spirit of God in the way of His good commandments.

For the Spirit the Church received on the glad day of Pentecost, is the Spirit of the living Lord. And He is not a spirit of bondage again to fear, but He is the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry: Abba, Father!

And thus, Spirit controlled, and Spirit led, we receive the testimony through that same Spirit that we are the sons of God!

Blessed Spirit of the Lord!

Abba, Father!

In this outcry of faith, of love, of hope and longing, the Church that is led by the Spirit expresses spontaneously her assurance of sonship.

In it they give testimony of their being conscious that they are the children of God.

Abba, Pater!

In the original there is a repetition of the same word, first in the Chaldean, then in the Greek, both words simply meaning *Father*. The double phrase was probably a standing expression, that had gradually been adopted in that form by the early Church. In the New Testament we find that it is used by our Lord in the hour of His great agony in Gethsemane; in the sixth verse of Gal. 4, where it is said that God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and it is

He that cries Abba, Father; and here in the fifteenth verse of Rom. 8, where believers are said to make this outcry under the impulse of the Spirit of adoption. Perhaps, it was the fact that the Lord expressed Himself in this phrase in the hour of His suffering, coupled with the circumstance that the early Church consisted of converts from Jews and Gentiles, that led to its adoption as a standing expression, perhaps even as a liturgical formula used by the Church.

Abba, Father!

It is the strong and clear expression of our sonship in relation to God, both in virtue of His gracious adoption, and by reason of our being born of Him.

For we are, first of all, children by adoption. By nature we are not children of God, but children of wrath. Because of our sin we are born as exiles from God's home wandering about in darkness and under condemnation. We have no right to be called God's sons, no right to dwell in His house, to the enjoyment of His blessed favor and of the pleasures that are at His right hand for evermore. But in pure grace He adopted us, bestowed on us the legal right to be called His sons, to be the objects of His love and favor, to dwell in His fellowship, and to become heirs of the eternal inheritance in His heavenly tabernacle. He forgives all our transgressions, and clothes us with an eternal righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord, all of pure grace, without any merit on our part.

And the consciousness of this adoption as children of God, of our full redemption, of the forgiveness of sins, of our perfect righteousness before God, of His free and sovereign everlasting love to us we express in this outcry: Abba, Father!

But there is more.

For it is not only by adoption that we become children of God. In fact, it would be impossible to lay hold on this blessed adoption, or even to long for it, and to rejoice in its possession and assurance, if God did not also bestow upon us and work within us the wonder of grace whereby we are born of Him, His image is restored within us, and we become sons of God in spiritual reality. But He realizes the adoption in our hearts by making us partakers of His nature. By nature we are not only devoid of the right to be called children of God, and to dwell in His house, but we are also enemies of God, minding the things of the flesh, loving the darkness rather than the light. We care not to dwell in God's house. Far from Him we wander and seek the good foolishly. But He reaches out into our hearts, removes the darkness, roots out the enmity, enlightens the mind, changes the refractory will, instills into our hearts a new life, the life of the risen Lord, assures us of His love, and causes us to love Him, to love His precepts, to love the brethren, to long for His fellowship, and to seek to be pleasing to Him,

And it is also the consciousness of this real, spiritual sonship, of this love to God and to one another, of this longing for His favor and fellowship, that is expressed in the cry: Abba, Father!

We cry!

It is a matter of fact!

The apostle does not speak here of a possibility. He does not state a general doctrine: believers cry Abba, Father! He does not put it in the form of an admonition or exhortation. The matter is definite and personal: *we*, the apostles, all believers, the whole Church of Christ in the world, cry Abba, Father!

Is it true?

Dare we follow the apostle and adopt his bold statement in application to ourselves?

O, let us not forget, as we try to answer this question, that it is a *cry* that leaves our lips, that is pressed from our hearts, when we say Abba, Father!

And to be sure, this means that the testimony concerning our sonship is expressed with fervency. It is strong, powerful, clear. But it also implies that it is made from the depths, as those that, while they are conscious of their nearness to God, are yet far off at the same time; as those that while they are assured of their sonship, yet look upon that sonship as something that must still be realized, and the realization of which seems to lie in the distant future; or as those who, while they are sons, yet are not sons; who, while they are righteous, yet are full of sin; who, while they live, yet lie in the midst of death; who, while they are heirs of all things, are in possession of nothing. From the depths, out of the midst of death, believers raise their cry: Abba, Father!

It is an outcry of the assurance of our adoption, and of the consciousness of our being children of God, but then, it is still a *cry*!

A groan of hope!

A cry of longing for the perfect day!

For as yet we have but a small beginning of the new obedience!

Yet, the beginning is a principle.

And by virtue of that principle we do sing with the psalmist: As the hart panteth after waterbrooks, so longs our soul for Thee!

For Thee, the living God!

Abba, Father!

Blessed Spirit of adoption!

For through Him alone may we carry this assurance of our sonship in our hearts.

It is not we that of ourselves cry *Abba, Father*!

How could we? Or what comfort and blessedness would there be in this outcry of assurance and longing, were it of ourselves? Are we, perhaps, not deceiving ourselves in so crying to God? Will He hear

us and receive us, and will He respond to our outcry? Do we, perhaps, too audaciously appropriate to ourselves what does not belong to us? Are we claiming a right which God does not seal? . . .

Only when the outcry is divinely wrought, only when it is but the expression of what God Himself impells us to cry, can there be the true assurance of sonship in our hearts when we cry *Abba, Father!*

And so it is.

For we have received the Spirit!

And the Spirit we have received is the real Author of this outcry, not we ourselves. He it is that always cries *Abba Father!* He does so as the Spirit of the Son in the adorable and blessed Trinity. For in that Spirit the Father eternally faces the Son saying: *My beloved Son*; and the Son is eternally facing the Father, saying: *Abba, Father*. He does so as the Spirit of Christ in Christ Himself. For it is in that Spirit that He cried to the Father in the days of His flesh and humiliation; and it is in that same Spirit that the Holy Child Jesus, now in the state of His exceeding glory constantly turns to His God crying *Abba, Father!* And it is in that same Spirit, the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ, poured forth into the Church, that believers in this world lift up their hearts to the God of their salvation in Christ Jesus their Lord, crying: *Abba, Father!*

For He is the Spirit of adoption!

He is not a spirit of bondage again to fear.

Such a spirit controls those that are outside of the sphere and influence of this Spirit. It is the spirit of the sinner that, instead of being filled with the true reverence of love that acknowledges that God is GOD and that causes us to prostrate ourselves before Him in true humility, proudly brings to Him the sacrifices of the wicked, claiming the right to be accepted of God on the basis of his own goodness, his religiousness, his own works, and thus becoming abominable in the sight of the Most High, and receiving the testimony of his condemnation and rejection in his conscience.

That is the spirit of bondage, that would work for God as a wage earner, being a stranger to the freedom of sons.

And that is the spirit that always fills with a slavish fear those that are possessed by it, for they never receive the assurance of forgiveness and righteousness, essential to all confidence and joy.

But such is not the Spirit we have received.

He is the Spirit of adoption, and, therefore, the Spirit of true and perfect liberty, the Spirit of forgiveness and righteousness, the Spirit of the love of God, in which there is neither bondage nor fear.

He is the Spirit of adoption in the sense that He serves the cause of our adoption, so that He realizes our adoption unto children of God unto us, and causes us to possess it, and to be assured of it, and to rejoice

in it, and to live in the consciousness and confidence and joy that we are the sons of God. We can speak of our adoption from before the foundation of the world. For God adopted us to be His sons in His everlasting good pleasure, when He chose us in Christ. We can speak of the objective realization of our adoption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, for He was delivered for our transgressions, and raised for our justification. The eternal adoption of all the elect was objectively realized when Christ died for our sins, and when God raised Him from the dead. And we may speak of our adoption through faith before our own consciousness, when we prostrate ourselves in dust and ashes before the face of God with the prayer of the publican in our hearts and upon our lips, and receive the testimony that our sins are forgiven, and that we are clothed with everlasting righteousness; that God loved us and gave His Son for us, and that He raised Him from the dead unto our personal justification.

It is in the last sense that the Spirit of Christ poured out into the Church is the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father!*

He it is that brings us to a true knowledge and consciousness of our sin and guilt before the face of God.

He is is that ingrafts us into Christ, and makes us partakers of His death and resurrection.

He it is that pours out the love of God into our hearts.

He bestows upon us all the benefits of Christ.

He makes us children of God!

Blessed gift of the Spirit!

Sons of God!

Blessed assurance!

Blessed, because the assurance is not of us, but is the response to the testimony of the same Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God!

For the Spirit abides with us. And dwelling within us, he testifies constantly with our spirit concerning our sonship in relation to God. Not, indeed, as if there were two independent testimonies, ours and His, coinciding with each other, but so that the Spirit of adoption, through the Word of Christ in the Scriptures, works within us the personal assurance of our adoption and sonship, and thus becomes the ground of the witness of our own spirit!

Thus we are assured of our sonship by God's own testimony!

And have confidence to cry:

Abba, Father!

H. H.

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION	Page
SPIRIT OF SONSHIP	365
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
EDITORIALS —	
AS TO OUR MORAL OBLIGATION	368
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE	
EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM	370
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
ZERUBBAAL	374
Rev. G. M. Ophoff	
EEN BANGE WORSTELING	377
Rev. G. Vos.	
CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN	380
Rev. P. De Boer.	
TESTAMENT	381
THE VALUE OF O. T. REVELATION FOR THE NEW	
Rev. G. Lubbers.	
THE BEAUTY OF THE YOUNG WOMAN	384
Rev. M. Gritters.	
GRIEVING THE SPIRIT	386
Rev. H. De Wolf.	
CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM AFTER CONSTANTINE	388
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.	

EDITORIALS

As To Our Moral Obligation

The contention of those that oppose the movement to establish our own schools is that such a movement is morally wrong, as long as we have not done all that is in our power to keep and support and improve the existing schools. In other words, they claim that we are morally obliged: 1. To join an existing school society, and to support an existing Christian school, wherever there is one; 2. To remain member of that society, and continue to support that existing school, even in cases where it is possible and preferable to organize a separate society; 3. To continue to send our children to that school, even though we know that they do not receive the education they should receive, and though it is possible to provide for them the education that is in harmony with our own convictions.

Now, I have never read or heard any sound argument in support of this contention. As far as I know it is a mere contention. We are simply told that this is our moral obligation, but on what basis this obligation rests, by what principles it is motivated, or by what moral standards or rules it is governed, has never been demonstrated. And I am afraid that, if the brethren that make this contention, would attempt to prove it, they would discover that this would be quite impossible.

That a man has a moral obligation in respect to a society of which he is a member, and as long as he is a member of it, we all grant. His obligation rests in his membership. But that he must remain a member of such a society, even if he can serve more effectively the *cause* represented by that society by establishing a separate society,—that would seem incapable of being proved. And we deny it most emphatically.

That Christian parents are morally obligated to provide a Christian school education for their children, and, therefore, to work to the utmost of their power for the cause of Christian instruction, may be taken for granted among us. But that parents are morally obliged to support and further this cause only through concrete, existing societies and schools, even when they can more effectively advance this cause by organizing their own schools,—that has never been demonstrated and is incapable of proof.

Suppose that in a certain place the only existing school was Lutheran. And suppose that in the same place there were a small number of Reformed families, too small to establish their own Christian school,

Suppose further for the time being these Reformed parents sent their children to this Lutheran school, in order to provide for them a Christian education "to the utmost of their power." And, finally, suppose that this number of Reformed families gradually increased, and became strong enough to organize their own society. Would they now be morally obliged to continue to send their children to the Lutheran school, and make the best of it?

You say, perhaps, that this is different, because we have no parochial or denominational, but free Christian schools.

Nominally this is true; actually however, the existing schools are Christian Reformed, even though they are supported by societies. They are entirely controlled by the Christian Reformed Church, and based on Christian Reformed principles. Where do the Protestant Reformed people have any influence, except in as far as they can let their voice be heard in a few local societies? The Union of Christian Schools is wholly controlled by Christian Reformed leaders; the Christian Home and School Magazine is a Christian Reformed publication; and, last but not least, the normal training of prospective teachers is furnished by a department of Calvin, and is, therefore, officially under the control of the Christian Reformed Church. And what is a school really but a staff of teachers?

Do not misunderstand me. I do not blame the Christian Reformed people for making their school education conform to their own convictions. I merely state a fact, and a very patent one. And I claim that their principles are not ours, and that, although I believe that our parents should send their children to the existing Christian schools where there is no other possibility, rather than send them to the public schools, that they cannot possibly have the moral obligation to do so wherever they are strong enough to establish their own schools, and to educate their children in harmony with their own convictions. On the contrary, I maintain that it is their sacred obligation to take the latter course, wherever possible.

And I am sure that no Christian Reformed man or group can blame us for taking this course.

We do not even have to point to certain evils existing in the Christian schools as we know them, as if they must be the reason why we should organize our own movement. This has been done too much, I think, with the result that the main issue has been lost sight of. If the situation were such that we could work on a common basis, and were fundamentally agreed as to what our children should be taught, but that, in spite of this fundamental agreement there were certain evils to be fought and removed, I would agree that we must attempt our utmost to remove these evils.

But this is not the case.

There is a fundamental difference between the

Christian Reformed and the Protestant Reformed Churches since 1924, and this fundamental difference, as officially expressed in the "Three Points," profoundly affects the education in the schools. And this is the reason why we should have our own schools wherever possible, in order that our children may be "brought up in the aforesaid doctrine," and that we may cause or help them to be brought up in that doctrine to the utmost of our power.

But let us try to analyze this question of our moral obligation a little more in detail.

It may not be superfluous first of all to ask the general question: what is meant by moral obligation, and what is our moral obligation in regard to the education of our children in the schools?

Surely, it must be agreed that moral obligation consists in obedience to the will of God both in respect to our relation to Him, and to our relation to our fellowmen. If one talks to me about my moral obligation in a certain case, he must be able to point out to me that what he considers my moral obligation is the will of God. If he cannot do this, he should refrain from insisting on it.

Now, with respect to education, what is the primary relation in which the will of God must be known and obeyed, and concerning which we may, therefore, speak of moral obligation?

The answer is plain: *it is the relation of parents to their children.*

Education is the duty of the parents.

On this we are all agreed.

And the moral obligation of the parents is rather clearly expressed in Deut. 6:4-7: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

One dare not say that this injunction was given to Israel of the old dispensation, and that it concerned the Old Testament law.

For the very form of this injunction is such that it applies to the people of God of all times. Still the Lord our God is one Lord, and still it is our "part" of the covenant of God to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul, and with all our power. And, therefore, it is still our moral obligation as parents to teach these words to our children, when we sit in our house, or walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up.

Besides this is the same injunction as comes to parents in the New Testament: "bring them up in the

nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4.

This is the moral obligation of which we are reminded in the Form for the Administration of Baptism. There, too, we are reminded that our "part" in the covenant is "that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life."

And we are made to assume this moral obligation with respect to the education of our children, when we are required to answer affirmatively two questions. The first is this: "Whether you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and which is taught here in this Christian Church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation?" And the second follows: "Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to the years of discretion, instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?"

Don't overlook that little but significant phrase: "here in this Christian Church," in the first of these two questions. Our fathers inserted that phrase quite intentionally. In fact, in the past there has been a rather heated controversy about these words, and repeated attempts were made, either to eliminate them, or to ascribe to them a meaning different from their intended significance. But in spite of it all they were retained.

And they mean just what they state.

When in a Protestant Reformed Church a child is baptized, the whole congregation confesses, and the parents of the children that are presented for baptism expressly state, that they believe the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation.

And it is in that connection that the second of these two questions must be read: the parents, in answering this question affirmatively, promise that they will bring up their children in the "aforesaid," that is, in the Protestant Reformed, doctrine, and that they will help or cause them to be instructed in that doctrine to the utmost of their power!

This, then, is our primary and most sacred moral obligation with respect to the education of our children.

On this we are all agreed.

And as we speak of our moral obligation to the existing schools, this primary and basic obligation must constantly be borne in mind.

How this basic obligation affects the particular question we are discussing, we hope to consider in another article, D.V.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO
OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day XII

4.

Melchisedec (cont.).

Besides, if in the priesthood of Melchisedec we must see a small remnant, a faint glittering of Adam's original priesthood, and if Christ is priest after the order of Melchisedec, it follows that also the priesthood of the Saviour, in distinction from that of Aaron, is only a restoration of the original priesthood of man in the state of righteousness. And against this presentation of the matter we have grave objections. It is rooted in the false conception that salvation is nothing but the reparation and restoration of creation. What Adam failed to do, Christ accomplishes. If Adam had not fallen, he would have attained to eternal life, and the human race would have attained to heavenly glory in and through him. But since he fell into sin and death, Christ must take his place, and obtain for us the eternal righteousness and life. Salvation is repair work. Sin and the devil really marred the work of God and prevented Him from realizing His original creation-purpose. But this entire view is contrary to Scripture, and unworthy of God, Who is the Lord and hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. There never was any other purpose in the eternal mind of God than that which is now attained in Christ, the anointed Servant of Jehovah. That purpose was to lead the Church and all things to their heavenly destination and perfection in Christ. Not the first, but the second Paradise of God is the end that must be attained. Not the covenant as it was established in the first Adam, but the tabernacle of God as it rests in the last Adam, the incarnated Word, the Lord from heaven, is the purpose God had in mind from before the foundation of the world. Not the priesthood of the first Adam, but the far more exalted priesthood of the Son of God in the flesh, is the divine ideal. Unto the attainment of that priesthood, which is as far more glorious than the original priesthood of creation as the Son of God in the flesh, raised and exalted at the right hand of God, is more glorious than the first man Adam, all things are subservient, and must serve

the counsel of the Most High, even the fall, sin, the devil, and death. And Adam's original priesthood was only a faint image of that glorious priesthood of the Son of God. But if this is born in mind, it should be evident that the priesthood of the historical Melchisedec, which was typical of the glorious priesthood of Christ, cannot have been a weak afterglow of Adam's priesthood.

The place of Melchisedec and his priesthood will have to be found in the line of grace.

His historical origin must be traced, not to paradise and the state of original righteousness, but to the ark, and to the grace Noah and his seed had found in the eyes of the Lord.

Not in the line of reprobation, in which by the power of a certain common grace a remnant of the original integrity is preserved, but in the line of election, in the generations of the people of God, saved by sovereign grace, the priest-king Melchisedec, as Abraham met him after his victory over the allied kings, must be placed. Historically, he was a real man of flesh and blood, and all the strange things that are written of him in the epistle of the Hebrews dare not be applied to his person, but have reference to his peculiar priesthood as typical of the priesthood of Christ. As priest he stands without father or mother, without genealogy, but as a person he has his descent in the generations of the sons of God.

In the abstract it were quite conceivable that Melchisedec even as a person was called forth by a wonder of God's grace, simply for the purpose of creating an altogether unique type of Christ, so that even as a historical person he appeared suddenly and inexplicably, without any historical connection with his contemporaries, as a priest of the Most High. There are those that prefer this explanation of his exalted figure. In that case he simply appears as a wonder of God's grace. He cannot be explained in connection with the history of his time. There is no relation between him and the world of his day and environment. As a unique individual, as a marvellous exception, he appears in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation. And in the midst of a world full of iniquity, he appears as a priest of the most high God, a wonderful manifestation of the wonder of God's grace.

But there is no need of such an interpretation, and the sober narrative of Genesis 14 leaves a different impression. He was a real historical person. He certainly was king of Salem, and he must have ruled over a real people. And as king he was also priest of God in the midst of his people, and in a sense, the people over which he ruled as king-priest must have been a priestly people, consecrated to God. The narrative of Genesis 14 leads to the conclusion that at the time when Abraham sojourned in the land of Canaan, there still was a group of people, a small nation, that knew

Jehovah, that served and worshipped the Most High, and that through Melchisedec as their high priest, brought their sacrifices to the God of Salem. Indeed, the Canaanite, too, was in the land, and the Canaanite was accursed, and had long trampled the covenant of Jehovah, established with Noah and his seed, under foot. But in the midst of a wicked generation there was also a remnant of God's people, according to the election of grace, a people that knew and served the Lord, and that were headed and represented by the priest-king Melchisedec. But if this is true, it is but natural to look for a historical explanation of this marvellous priest-king and his people. Only, this explanation must not be sought in the line of the wicked reprobates, but in the line of the generations of the people of God, in which, even outside of Abraham, God still preserved His covenant in those days.

Nor can this present any special difficulties, if we bear in mind the organic development of God's covenant and its continuation in the line of generations. Then it is at once evident that Melchisedec as a priest of the most high God, together with the people over which he ruled, has his origin in the ark. In the ark and through the flood the Church of God had been saved out of and from the wicked world. And with Noah and his seed God had established His covenant, not a certain covenant of common grace with all men, but His covenant in Christ in the line of election. But as always, so also from the loins of Noah there developed the twofold seed, the seed of the promise and the carnal seed. The main line of the covenant according to election ran through Shem, and was afterwards more specifically limited to the generations of Abraham. But this may not be understood as if with the calling of Abraham God's covenant was strictly limited to him and his family, so that the father of believers was a lonely remnant of those that knew Jehovah, and called upon the name of the Lord. He who would thus explain the situation at the time of Abraham's calling, would fail to reckon with the organical development of the covenant-line in history. Not at once and all of a sudden was the fear of the Lord limited to the generations of Abraham. For, first of all, during Abraham's life many of the old patriarchs from the generations of Shem that culminated in Terah, the father of Abraham, were still alive, and even Shem was still living when the father of believers was called. Even though the immediate ancestors of Abraham apostatized and turned to idols, there must have been thousands of others in the earlier generations that kept the covenant of Jehovah. Besides, although the generations of Shem had been mentioned as those that were destined to receive the covenant blessing in a special sense, for a long time the fear of the Lord must have been preserved also in the generations of Japheth, and it is not even improbable that also in the line of Ham

there were found those that called upon the name of Jehovah. In view of all these data, it is by no means strange that even in the land of Canaan, at the time of Abraham's sojourn in the land, a group of people is found that have the knowledge of the true God, and that are ruled and represented by a priest-king like Melchisedec. Some four centuries later we meet with a similar figure in the person of Jethro, the father in law of Moses. He, too, was a priest of the Most High among his people, although the line of the covenant in the narrower sense of the word did not run over the children of Keturah, but over Isaac, for "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Hence, if only we bear in mind the organic development of the covenant in the line of generations, we have no need of explaining Melchisedec as a product of common grace. Nor is it necessary to interpret his appearance as priest of the Most High through an exceptional wonder of God's grace. Although he stands outside of the generations of Abraham, and, perhaps, even of Shem, Melchisedec as a historical person must be explained as belonging to the generations of those that feared the Lord, and with whom God still continued His covenant.

He was a priest of the Most High by grace.

And as such he was a type of Christ.

5.

After The Order Of Melchisedec

Interesting as may be the historical appearance of Melchisedec as a king-priest, Scripture is chiefly concerned with his typical significance. Emphatically the Bible teaches that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. This is the teaching of that beautiful, prophetic-Messianic Psalm 110 as further interpreted in the epistle to the Hebrews. Distinction is made between the priesthood of Aaron and that of Melchisedec, and with this distinction in view Christ is said to be a priest according to the similitude of the latter. This does not mean that there is an antithesis between the two orders of priesthood, and that the two exclude each other. It is evident that in certain respects they were alike. Also the priesthood of Aaron foreshadowed that of the great High Priest that was to come: Aaron, too, was a type of Christ. The situation is rather thus that, while the priesthood according to the order of Melchisedec included that of Aaron, the former is of a far more exalted character than the latter, was much richer in significance, of a wider scope, of far greater power and authority. And while the priesthood of Aaron found its final fulfillment in Christ, and in some respects also its termination, that of Melchisedec was so realized in the Lord that in Him it is perfect and remains for ever.

The question, therefore, is: what is the distinction between the two orders of priesthood? In what respects was the priesthood of Melchisedec of a higher order than that of Aaron? Scripture emphasizes especially two points of difference. The first is that, while among Israel the priestly and the royal offices were separated, so that one and the same person could not function in both offices, they were combined in Melchisedec: he was a royal priest. And the second point of difference is that, while the priesthood of Aaron in its specific meaning was temporal, and must come to an end as soon as the perfect sacrifice was made, that of Melchisedec was everlasting. In both these respects Christ was a priest according to the similitude of Melchisedec.

This is emphasized, first of all, in Psalm 110. This Psalm is peculiar in that it is directly Messianic. By this we mean that, while in other Messianic Psalms David speaks first of himself, and only in last instance of the Christ that was to come, this cannot be said of the one hundred and tenth Psalm. Usually there was a historic occasion for the Messianic prophecies in the psalms in the person and circumstances and experiences of the human author of these psalms, especially of the psalms of David. David was a type of Christ as the theocratic king of Israel, and his experiences, his battles, his victories, and his sufferings foreshadowed the suffering, victory and exaltation of the Messiah that was to come. And when in those circumstances David, inspired and guided by the Spirit of Christ, expressed his experiences in the psalms, whether in lamentation and wailing because of his suffering and reproach, in deprecation against the enemies of God and His Anointed, or in triumph over his foes, he spoke, indeed, of himself, but thus speaking, he prophesied at the same time of Christ. The Spirit of Christ in the psalmist made use of his personal experiences and circumstances to draw a prophetic picture of the Messiah. But this is not the case with Psalm 110. It is directly Messianic. Its contents cannot refer to the Psalmist.

That this is true is evident, first of all, from the very first verse of the Psalm: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." In His controversy with the Pharisees the Lord refers to these words as proof that Christ is the Son of God: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ, whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" and we read that the Pharisees were not able to answer him a word. Matt. 22:41-46. Cf. Mk. 12:35-37; Luke

20:41-44. From this first verse of the Psalm, and from the application made of it by Christ, it is evident, therefore, that David is not at all speaking of himself, but refers consciously and objectively to the Messiah. Him he calls his Lord. And to Him Jehovah said: "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

But this is true also of vs. 4: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." It is true that, according to some interpreters, these words must be interpreted as being spoken by the people, and addressed to David. But, first of all, this explanation is contrary to the tenor of the whole psalm, which, as has been shown, speaks of the Messiah directly. It is quite in harmony with the context to say that also these words are addressed to Christ. And, secondly, they could not have been spoken of David. For the offices of priest and king were not combined in him. He was king of Israel, but the priesthood was found in the generations of Aaron, not in those of Judah and David. Hence, these words cannot have reference to him. Nor can the interpretation be accepted that one of the priest-kings of the time of the Maccabees is the author of this psalm, and that the reference is to him. It is true that in some of the Maccabees the two offices of priest and king were combined in the same person. But the one great objection to this interpretation is that the psalm is Davidic, as is sufficiently proved by the Lord's own reference to it in the words quoted above. Hence, there is only one possibility, and that is, that the words concerning the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec are immediately and directly Messianic. And this is corroborated by the reference to them in the epistle to the Hebrews.

Now, even from these words in their context it is evident that the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec was distinct from that of Aaron in two respects. First of all, it is a royal priesthood. For in the kingship is combined with the priesthood. For in the context we have a description of Christ in His royal glory, of the King going to battle at the head of His people, and victorious over His enemies. It is to Christ in His royal power and exaltation that it is said: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And to this victorious and exalted King it is promised by oath: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Even as Melchisedec was a royal priest, or a priestly king, so also Christ will combine in Himself the kingly and priestly office, and that, too, in final and highest perfection, at the right hand of God. And, secondly, in close connection with this combination of the royal and priestly offices, the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec is distinct in that it is for ever: "thou

art a priest *for ever*." The priesthood of Aaron would come to an end; that of Melchisedec as realized in Christ is everlasting.

This interpretation of the priesthood according to the similitude of Melchisedec with its special element in the combination of the royal and priestly offices, is quite in harmony with the prophecy of Zechariah in chapter 6:9ff. The prophet is enjoined to take silver and gold of them that of the captivity have come from Babylon to Jerusalem, and to make crowns of the precious metal thus acquired. These crowns he is to set upon the head of Joshua, the high priest, thus indicating prophetically that the priest shall be crowned king. However, this is to be fulfilled, not in Joshua, but in the BRANCH, for the prophet must explain his prophetic act by saying to Joshua: "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of this place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." It is evident that in this prophecy we have a further prediction of what was already promised in Psalm 110, and that the last words have no reference whatever to any alleged covenant of redemption in the eternal decree of God, but to the harmonious union between the king and the priest, united in the one person of the BRANCH, that is, of the Messiah.

And this is rather elaborately developed in the epistle to the Hebrews. Of Melchisedec as a type of Christ the author of this epistle is speaking. And calling attention to his name, and to the place of his reign, he explains that as a typical figure Melchisedec was both king of righteousness and king of peace. The name *Melchi-sedec* signifies *king of righteousness*, and as *Salem* means peace, king of Salem signifies *king of peace*. And concerning his priesthood the author of the epistle to the Hebrews reminds us, first of all, that Melchisedec was a priest of the most high God, and, further, he describes him as appearing "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abiding a priest continually." Heb. 7:1-3. You understand that all this is applicable to Melchisedec, not as a historical person, but as a type of Christ, and with reference only to his priesthood. He appears in Genesis 14 as priest without any reference to his descent or genealogy. Nor is anything said about his end, or about the continuation of his priesthood in his generations. He had no need, as did the Aaronitic priest, to prove that he descended from the priestly family. And in all this he is typically, not personally, made like unto the Son of God, the Christ, in Whom all these typical

traits are realized in highest perfection. And here again, the same two elements of the priesthood of Melchisedec that were mentioned in Psalm 110 appear on the foreground: he was a priest-king, and his priesthood is everlasting.

H. H.

Zerubbaal

"The Lord is with thee thou mighty hero." Such, so we saw, was the Angel's greeting to Gideon. Attention was directed to the *might* of this hero. His might, it was pointed out, was his living faith in Jehovah, Israel's God and Saviour, faith in His righteous and unchangeable mercy, in His willingness to forgive and His power to save His ill-deserving people that He might be feared. The faith of Gideon was living. As brought to fruition in him by the word of God, sanctified to his heart by the Spirit, it translated itself into action—faith without works is dead—that consisted in his throwing down Baal's altar in Ophrah and in building an altar unto the Lord; in calling the tribes concerned to arms, and finally in doing battle with the Midianite hordes with a band of men ridiculously small. And the Lord God gave him the victory not only in response to but even *through* his faith. So did his faith overcome the world as represented by the Midianite hordes. To this fact and truth we must return in the sequence.

God gave Gideon that faith and realized in him its strength. It has been said that of all the instruments that God did use in so great a work, none was so weak as Gideon. In the light of the consideration that faith both in its beginnings and in its full power is a gift of God, this remark is rather pointless. True it is, however, that God's dealings with Gideon (and with all His people for that matter) incites wonder. It calls for explanation. Replying to the Jews' request for a sign, Christ said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Matt. 12:40). But to Gideon God gladly gave signs, the last of which—the dream of the Midianite—was even unsolicited. But by the mercy of God Gideon, in distinction from the Jews, *wanted* to believe. Thus his petitions for signs were so many prayers to the effect, "Lord, help thou my unbelief," and thus rose from a conscious need of the word of God to revive and stimulate his faith. So, in granting with such eagerness Gideon's petitions, the Lord was simply responding to His own work in His servant.

It is good to observe the growing power of Gideon's faith. What especially confirmed him in his assurance that God had chosen him to save Israel, was the glad tidings, "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die," words that he had great need of hearing in that, perceiving that the messenger was the angel of the Lord, he thought he must die. "Alas O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." What these words, spoken under the impulse of a great dread, indicate is that Gideon was aware that the messengers, who had just departed out of his sight—vanished, so it had seemed, into the thin air—was no less than Jehovah Himself. Thus he had seen God; but it was not His face, His immediate glory, that Gideon had beheld. Being a sinful man under the dominion of earthy and carnal sense, he could not have endured that glory, which "to see" means to receive the light of the sun into the eyes of flesh. So, what Gideon had beheld is the obscured glory of the Incomprehensible, His "back parts," Ex. 33:34. But even this vision—a vision that all the wicked will behold in the day of Christ's appearing—must needs result in his death, should grace not intervene. For he was a sinful man. And Jehovah is a consuming fire. Yet Gideon must not fear. For He is Christ's and participates in His redemption. Unto him—peace. He shall not die. He now knew in his heart that God had accepted his person and had chosen him to save His people. If at first he was doubtful and complaining, he was now fully assured. And under the impulse of the heavenly gladness that filled his soul, he built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it "Jehovah-peace," Ch. 6:24. The sacred author added, "Unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites." There it stood, in afteryears, long after the passing of Gideon, a memorial of the great event in his life—the event of his having seen God and lived. There it stood, a memorial also of the great salvation that God wrought through him, His servant. And it also stood there, did this altar, a pre-indication of the doom of the reprobated and thus carnal apostate Israel.

Thus assured of his own personal salvation, and knowing himself called to the great work of regaining, instrumentally, the lost liberties of his ill-deserving people and thus convinced that the Lord was certainly resolved to save His people through another wonder of His grace, Gideon was ready to follow where the Lord should lead. So "it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: and build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of the rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the grove

which thou shalt cut down" (ch. 6:25, 26).

A great sin had been committed. Jehovah, Israel's Maker and Redeemer had been forsaken and the favorite diety was now Baal. Thus the present bondage was divine visitation, punishment for sin. The Midianites were the scourge of the Almighty indeed. Israel would again be free only in the way of repudiation of Baal and a return to God. Only when they served the Eternal was liberty possible and necessary. Jehovah would bring Himself down to the level of the tribal gods of the heathen, should He send salvation with Israel crowding Baal's temples. It was in acknowledgement of these great truths that Gideon had first to strike against idol-worship and, in the nature of matters, against the idol-worship of his own family. There in his own village stood the altar of Baal, the symbol of Israel's infidelity; and there beside it the abominable Asherah, the sign of Israel's degradation. Courage to call the tribes to arms would be lacking to him, and the will to respond to this call would be lacking to the tribes, should he not first remove that filthy sink of idolatry polluting his own clan. In order to have influence with the brethren, he must first make war against the idols in his own house. Reformation must begin at home, first in the heart of the reformer and by his own fire-side. And these centers must be kept pure or the power to achieve in the surrounding fields of conflict will be wholly lacking.

So God gave Gideon the command and the will to war His warfare first in Ophrah his own place of residence and that of his father's house. This was his first task. Its performance required courage. The men of Ophrah—Cnnaaaites and the apostate members of his own clan—were zealous for Baal. They stood ready to do a man to death, should he venture to destroy the altars and shrines of their beloved deity. But Gideon was a mighty hero. For he had seen God face to face and his life had been spared. He had great courage therefore, the courage born of the faith that God was for and with him and that the unction by which he was being driven was of the Spirit. He did as the Lord had commanded. With the aid of ten of his servants he threw down the altar of Baal that had been erected on his father's estate and cut down the grove that was by it. The Asherah was torn out and cut to pieces. In their place was erected an altar to God from pure earth and stones. Wood was piled up on it—the wood of the grove. And the bullock was taken and offered as a burnt-offering. The altar was built on the top of the fortification, on the forward edge i.e., on some place of defence, where the altar of Baal stood. It was stated at the outset that Israel made themselves fortifications against the enemy. Seeing what was being done to their beloved idol, the apostates, who were vastly in the majority, could

have been counted on to forcibly interfere with the good work. It was therefore not fear for his own safety but prudence that caused Gideon to perform his task under the cover of the night. The apostates must remain in total ignorance of what was going on until the work was finished. The place where Gideon had to work, though it lay within the jurisdiction of Joash, must have been at some distance from the city, as otherwise the inhabitants would have been awakened by the proceedings. Perhaps some of them were, but, being too fond of sleep, could not rouse themselves to investigate. But they were up and doing at the first streak of dawn, so it is related. For they had heard unusual sounds in the night—the crash of felled trees; and it may have occurred to them that all might not be well with their idol. They therefore may not have been overly surprised at what they saw: the altar of Baal cast down, the grove cut down that was beside it, and the newly erected altar with the bullock offered upon it. "And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing?" Mark you, they put the question to themselves; they themselves therefore also supply the answer. They say, "Gideon the son of Joash hath done this." It is most illuminating that instantaneously their thoughts turned to Gideon and to him alone. It indicates that he was known among them as a hater of Baal but also that in his opposition to Bal he stood quite alone and thus had the active support not even of his own father. Though obviously in sympathy with his son, yet under the pressure brought to bear upon him by his family, he, in his weakness, had allowed the apostates to erect Baal's altar upon his own estate, though it may be imagined that he himself took no part in the idolatrous worship. In this respect he was like Aaron who, yielding to popular clamor, made an idol for the people.

Convinced in themselves that the perpetrator could be none other than Gideon, the apostates went to his father and demanded of him that he surrender to them his son that he might be put to death. Joash was the head of the family; as such he was required to deliver up Gideon. But now it came out that the disposition of Joash was similar to that of Gideon. He did a heroic thing. Holding out against the mob—one against many, and the many, idolaters, intolerant and fierce men—he said to them, "Will ye strive for Baal? Will ye save him who will strive for him? Let him be put to death while it is yet morning. If he (Baal) be a god, he will strive for himself with respect to him who broke down his altar."

The answer is energetic and masterly ironical. Joash was now a man transformed. The daring of his son had powerfully stimulated his faith so that he dared take a stand. And so he did. The thrust of his argument is such as to set the doing of those

apostates—their clamoring for the death of Gideon—in a ridiculous light.

Is Baal contending for himself through you as his prophetic agents? Has he, your idol, called you? Are you under his orders? Is it by his command, power, and inspiration that ye contend? If not, if you are under orders of none other but yourselves, ye contend for Baal i.e., in his room and declare, through your doing, that he is powerless to contend for himself and by consequence deny that he has ears wherewith to hear and eyes wherewith to see and a voice wherewith to speak, in a word, deny that he is. Understand, therefore, that in contending for Baal you, in the point of view of his devotees, blaspheme your deity and therefore deserve to die. Tell me, will ye strive for Baal? Will you spare him who will strive for Baal? Nay, but let that man be put to death, while it is yet morning. And if Baal be a god, he will strive for himself with respect to Gideon, the offender. If he be a god, he will not let untouched this sacriligious destroyer of his altar but will either strike him down from heaven with his thunderbolts or give command to you, his devotees, concerning him. So wait with executing sentence upon the offender, until Baal has spoken, acts, strives, for himself. If he is a god, he will, certainly.

As the apostates knew full well that Baal would take no action because he could not, and as they also knew that such certainly was the conviction of Joash; thus, as they were keenly aware that he no more than they believed in that for which they were spending their zeal, they perceived that what he was actually telling them is that Baal is no god, that their kneeling before his shrine was therefore abject foolishness and high treason against Jehovah, and that henceforth he, Joash, and his immediate family, no more than Gideon, would have anything to do with their idol, would even forbid the restitution of this pagan worship on his estate. The apostates must have seethed with anger at the hearing of these words. Had they acted upon their wicked impulses, they might have torn him and his son in pieces. For they felt the sting of his words. And they loved their idol because they loved their sinful flesh. Yet they did nothing at all. For Joash had openly denied the existence of Baal yet not strictly so as to the form of his words. "If Baal be a god, will he not contend for himself?" Such had been his speech and thus not, "Baal is no god; he can take no action." As Elijah was to do, Joash advocated that the matter be put to a test and that in the meantime the accusers assume a waiting attitude. Certainly, they would have no objection. It was fair enough to all concerned. So the apostates in small groups slunk away, each one going to his own place.

In vain did Baal's servants wait for vengeance to overtake Gideon. Nothing disastrous befell him, neither

on that day nor on all the days to come. Thus Gideon became the living proof that Baal is no god, and that the belief that he could and would avenge himself was a vile superstition. On that same day therefore Gideon received from his father, from Joash, the surname Jerubbaal. The significant explanation of this name follows, "Let Baal strive for himself with respect to him (Gideon) who brake down his altar." Thus what Baal, were he a god, could and should do in behalf of himself, namely, strike down Gideon, was set forth in a name; and the name was imposed upon Gideon's person in order that his living presence among his people and his dying a natural death might, through the ages, witness to the truth and fact that Baal is vanity, a god of man's own devising.

Thus the name *Jerubbaal* does not mean "contender with Baal," as several commentators have maintained. The name, so construed, implies that Baal has existence.

Having, in his own city, destroyed Baal's altar and on its ruins restored the true worship of Jehovah, Gideon could now address himself to the second part of his task in the confidence that the Lord would be with him. With the new name Jerubbaal, he was acknowledged as leader in Israel by all those who feared God. The name itself was full of the triumph of faith over the world as represented by the Midianite hordes. Another day of hope had dawned with Ophrah now the religious center. For there stood God's altar.

"The Medianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jerael" (chap. 6:33). From the desert regions beyond Jordan they again pressed forward and had settled down like a heavy cloud on the plain. The Spirit of God came upon Gideon, literally, "put him on." He sounded the trumpet in the mountains. Though the youngest in the family and that the least in Manasseh, the men of his own clan gathered about him and he stood at the head of a not inconsiderate army. But the Midianites "had come as grasshoppers for multitude". So he sent messengers throughout Manasseh and unto Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. And they gathered after him. The muster of men was considerable and perhaps astonished him. The number given is 33,000. But the Midianites were in enormous numbers. Gideon was in the need of assurance of victory. This he sought in God alone and received the double sign of the fleece. And he believed and advanced another step. Rising up early, he led his forces northward beside the well of Herod so that the host of the Midianites was on the north.

God again spake. "The people that are with thee are too many. . . . Gideon was instructed to make the proclamation that those who were fearful and afraid should return to their homes and only ten thousand

Israelites remained. Again the Lord spake. "The people are yet too many. . . ." Let him bring the people down to the water "and I will try them there". The Lord would have yet another winnowing. "Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink."

"Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth. . . ." (vs. 5). Just how these words are to be understood is evident from verse 6, "And the number of them that lapped, *putting their hand to their mouth*, were three hundred men. . . ." Hence, the words quoted from vs. 5 must be understood, as if they read: "Every one who lappeth with his hand from the water as lappeth a dog with his tongue from the water." These, in distinction from the others, did not kneel or lie down by the edge of the brook by putting their lips to the water, but they drank in an upright posture, using the hollow of the hand to take up water and carry it to the mouth and thus making the hand answer to the concave tongue of the dog. By these—the three hundred men who lapped—"will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand. And let all the other people go every man unto his place."

The three hundred now took from the people what they needed to venture to the battle, victuals and trumpets, and the others were dismissed. There was now with Gideon a select band of three hundred prepared for a night attack upon the adversary. To dispel lingering anxiety, the Lord sent Gideon with his servant to the camp of the Midianites; and there they listened intently to the dream and its interpretation. And "their hands were strengthened." For they learned that the name of the Lord had kindled terror in the ranks of the enemy as an indication that He was preparing victory for His people. They knew that God had done this and they worshipped.

Encouraged, Gideon divided his band into three companies and put trumpets in the hand of all of them with empty pitchers and a torch within the pitchers. His plan was to surround the hostile encampment. He bade the two companies who were to take their positions on the other sides to attend to his signals and do as he should do. The middle watch was just begun when Gideon came to the border line of the camp. Enormous was the panic that seized on Midian, when the trumpets sounded, the pitchers crashed, the battle-cry broke out and the torches blazed. The terror which seized Midian was the terror of God. The narrative brings this out. "And the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow even throughout the host: and the host fled."

G. M. O.

Een Bange Worsteling

(Psalm 73)

Ja, een bange worsteling, doch een strijd waarin Asaf als overwinnaar te voorschijn treedt. Door Gods kracht. Vers 17. Het keerpunt in den psalm ligt in dat vers verscholen. Toen Asaf oordeelde buiten de heiligdommen Gods oordeelde hij in 't donker. Toen hij vanuit de heiligdommen Gods nog eens zag en woog en meette, toen was het goed. Het einde van den psalm is rust, hemelsche rust.

Asaf is de dichter. ' Staat er. Toch zijn er velen geweest die denken, dat David ook dezen psalm geschied heeft. De stijl zou het verraden. Ik ben niet genoegzaam op de hoogte met de studie van tekst-critiek om hierover te oordeelen. Degenen die die gedachte zijn toegedaan, zeggen, dat David de dichter was, dat Asaf hem bijstond. Zoodat dan Psalm 73 een gedicht is van twee componisten. 'k Blijf er af.

Asaf was in groote benauwdheid geweest. Hij zag de groote voorspoed der goddeloozen en de smart van Gods volk. Toen had hij gevraagd: Zou God eigenlijk wel alle dingen besturen? Dat was benauwd geweest voor hem. Want hij had God lief. Evenwel, hij had niet alzo gesproken. Hij was bang voor het gevolg van zulke onderwijzing. Hij was bang dat Gods volk dan geërgerd zou worden. En dat mocht niet.

Dus hij worstelde den strijd geheel alleen. Tot het zalige einde. Toen hij niet verder kon is hij naar de heiligdommen Gods gegaan. En daar zag hij de oplossing van al zijn problemen. Doen wij desgelijks.

Door de worsteling heen tot de volle oplossing was Asaf tot een zekere conclusie gekomen. En die conclusie spreekt hij uit aan het begin van dit gedicht. Met andere woorden: Asaf heeft wat geleerd. En het geleerde schrijft hij eerst neer. Vooraleer hij overgaat om de geheele worsteling ons te vertellen.

Hij is zóó zeker van het geleerde, dat hij een klein woordje neerschrijft geheel aan het begin van het eerste vers. Dat woordje is vertaald door *Immers*. Het beteekent dit: geheel en al, uitsluitend. En de betekenis van dit eerste vers is daarom: God is uitsluitend goed aan Israel. De idee is, in nauw verband met de worsteling die Asaf ervaren had: Wat er ook gebeure hier op aarde, en hoe het ook anderzins schijnen moge: God is alleenlijk goed aan Sion! Daar ging het om in Asaf's worsteling. Het scheen eerst zóó, dat God goed was aan de goddeloozen en kwaad tegen Zijn eigen volk. Doch Asaf had uitgevonden, dat het juist niet zoo was. Daarom begint hij met nadruk te zeggen: God is *alleenlijk* goed aan Israel. Alleen maar zóó te verstaan, aan dat Israel, wat rein van harte is. Het is niet al Israel, wat Israel heet. Hij heeft voor

den aandacht het volk dat rein van harte is.

Wat is een reine van hart?

Een reine van hart is iemand wiens hart gezuiverd is van alle elementen die er volgens Gods schepping-ordonnantien niet inhooren. Het woord waarvan *rein* afgeleid is, beteekent: afzonderen, van vuilheid zuiveren, schoonmaken. Een rein hart is daarom een gezuiverd hart. Het is hetzelfde hart waarvan Jezus zeide in Matth. 5: Zalig zijn de reinen van hart, want zij zullen God zien. Het is een hart, dat door Gods genade wederomgeboren is. Van een steenen hart wordt het een vleeschen hart, teeder, zacht, lieflijk, hongerende en dorstende naar God, de Fontein van dat hart.

Dus bedoelt Asaf: God is alleenlijk goed aan Israel, dat door God gereinigd en gezuiverd is!

Hoe kwam hij tot die belijdenis? Door een bange worsteling! Luistert, hij zal het U vertellen.

“Maar mij aangaande, mijne voeten waren bijna uitgeweken, mijne treden waren bijkans uitgeschoten!” Let er op, dat de Heere hem niet geheel en al losgelaten had. Dat is ook overduidelijk in den psalm. Eerst, omdat hij verwachtte dat God de goddeloozen zou straffen. Hij had het goddelijk recht lief. Tweedens, verwachtte hij, dat God het goede beloonen zou. Hij kende God. Derdens, hij ondervond moeite toen hij het kromme wilde rijmen. Hij had een oprechte ziel. Vierdens, hij ging naar Gods heilighdommen. Hij bezat den waren godsdienst. 't Kwam terecht met Asaf.

Hij beschrijft zijn zonde in één vers: “Want ik was nijdig op de dwazen, ziende der goddeloozen vrede.” En de vrede dier goddelooze dwazen beschrijft hij dan in de verzen 4-12.

Nu loopt het direkt in het oog, dat wat Asaf hier gaat zeggen van die goddeloozen niet toegepast kan worden op *alle* goddeloozen, om de eenvoudige reden, dat alle goddeloozen niet rijk zijn. Hij heeft een bijzonder soort goddeloozen voor den aandacht. Dit zoudt ge nog mogen zeggen: Als alle goddeloozen in gelijke omstandigheden verkeerden als het volk dat Asaf beschrijft, zij zeker even gemeen zouden handelen. Maar alle goddeloozen zijn niet zonder ziekte en moeite, zijn niet allen rijk, zoodat zij de inbeeldingen des harten te boven gaan. Alle menschen die zonder God in de wereld zijn hebben geen rust en ook vermenigvuldigen zij hun vermogen niet.

Neen, Asaf moet een bijzonder soort goddeloozen voor den aandacht gehad hebben. Hij had het over de rijke goddeloozen.

Het volk dat hij beschrijft gaat alles voor den wind. Let er maar op Hij begint met te zeggen, dat er geen banden zijn tot den dood toe. Ook is het wel duidelijk wat Asaf met die banden bedoelt, want hij voegt er aan toe: en hunne kracht is frisch. Die banden zijn de ziekte en krankheid. Dit volk heeft

de rijkdom van gezondheid. Er zijn van die menschen. En ik verzeker U, dat ziekte en zwakheid en allerlei krankheden, vreeselijke banden zijn. In den volksmond zeggen we immers: Hij lag op het ziekbed gekluisterd. En kluisteren meent: aan banden leggen.

Dit volk weet daar niet van. Hun kracht is frisch elken morgen. Dat soort menschen is zóó gewend aan frissche kracht, dat ze 's avonds al zeggen: “Komt herwaarts, zeggen ze, ik zal wijn halen, en wij zullen sterken drank zuipen; en de dag van morgen zal zijn als deze, ja grooter, veel treffelijker!” Jesaja 56:12. Het volk dat hier beschreven wordt door Asaf vindt zijn vertegenwoordiger in den rijken man van de gelijkenis van Jezus die was “levende allen dag vroolijk en prachtig.” Of ook de rijke dwaas van een andere gelijkenis die tot zijn ziel zeide: “Ziel, gij hebt vele goederen, die opgelegd zijn voor vele jaren: neem rust, eet, drink, wees vroolijk!” Lucas 12:19. Dat volk heeft Asaf op het oog. Als hij hen nauwkeurig gadeslaat, dan merkt hij, dat zij niet in moeite zijn gelijk andere menschen en dat ze met andere menschen niet geplaagd zijn. Het is het volk waarvan Jezus zeide tot den rijder op het zwarte paard: Beschadig de olie en den wijn niet! Terwijl alles bij andere menschen als bij de hand afgesneden wordt, zoodat ze keer op keer van voren af aan moeten beginnen, gaat het dit volk altijd goed. Alles waar ze de hand aan slaan geeft winst af. Hun vermogen groeit verbazend aan. Let maar op den rijken dwaas: Eens *rijken* mans land had *wél* gedragen. Let er op, dat vooraleer er een rijken oogst kwam, was die man al rijk. Het gaat met dat volk van rijkdom tot rijkdom. Terwijl de andere menschen in allerlei moeite zijn.

Ge zult dan zeggen: Ja, maar er zijn toch ook wel godvruchtige rijke menschen geweest! En dan antwoord ik U: zeer zeker! Doch ga even verder. Wat uitwerking had die rijkdom van dit soort menschen? Dit: “*Daarom* omringt ze de hoovaardij als een keten, het geweld bedekt ze als een gewaad”. Daar hebt ge het verschil. Als een kind Gods rijk wordt dan kunt ge het in zijn rijkdom zien, dat het hem tot zegen is. Met een goddeloos mensch gaat het anders. Het brengt hem tot hoogmoed. Neemt nu de twee karaktertrekken tezamen en ge krijgt een mensch die geheel en al behept is met gewelddrijvende hoovaardij. Wat een verachtelijk mensch. Als mensch gesproken nu: geen wonder, dat Asaf nijdig werd op die dwazen. Ge moet er maar eens mee in aanraking komen! Past op! Die gewelddrijvende hoovaardij bedekt hen als een keten en als een gewaad. Dat beduidt, dat wanneer ge hen ook tegenkomt, altijd zult ge lijden van hun hoogmoed en van hun geweld.

Hun geheele openbaring is een advertentie, een luide bekendmaking hoe het er bijstaat met hen. Hunne oogen puilen uit van vet! Ze gaan de inbeeldingen

des harten te boven. Die twee zaken beteekenen eigenlijk hetzelfde. Onze oogen behoeven nu eenmaal niet uit te puilen van vet. Het staat veel beter als alle vet gespeend is aan onze oogen. Maar dit volk heeft zóóveel ontvangen, dat ze het eigenlijk niet opkunnen. Ge moogt het om wel figuurlijk toepassen: de voorspoed glinstert hun op 't gelaat. Ge kunt het overal aan merken, dat ze meer hebben dan ze strikt behoeven. Ge zult het ook wel gewaar worden. Daar zorgen ze wel voor. Vers 8 en 9 zullen het U vertellen. Maar eerst nog dat tweede gelid van 't 7de vers: "Ze gaan de inbeeldingen des harten te boven". Dat beteekent hetzelfde als die vette uitpuilende oogen. Dat zit zoo: Voor ge iets koopt tot genieting is er een inbeelding des harten. Als het er nu magertjes bijstaat met U, dan moet ge altijd oppassen met die inbeeldingen des harten, want de "pocketbook" kan al die inbeeldingen niet bestrijken. Met dit volk is het anders. Zij hebben zóóveel, dat ze de inbeeldingen des harten te boven gaan. Ze kunnen alles wat ze willen; en dan is er ook nog over. Ze kunnen het niet op. Die vette oogen weer. Duidelijker nog in de Engelsche tekst: They have more than heart could wish! Arme stakkerds!

Nu komt er een beschrijving van de gewelddrijvende hoovaardij: Ze mergelen de lieden uit, en spreken booslijk van verdrukking; zij spreken uit de hoogte; zij zetten hun mond tegen den hemel, en hunne tong wandelt op de aarde.

Ge moet niet denken, dat dit volk ooit tevreden is. O neen! Al zouden ze millioenen opstapelen, dan blijft de grondtrek van hun hart: Nog meer! Nog meer! Hebt ge wel eens een plaatje gezien van een vrek? Met uitgestrekte klauwen schraapt men het geld naar zich toe. Al hangt er het zweet of de tranen van de weduwe aan, dat geeft niet. Ze mergelen de lieden uit.

Wat is het gevolg? Wel, ge kunt toch wel begrijpen, dat die arme uitgemergelde lieden hun mond niet dichthouden? Zij protesteeren! En wat dan? Dan spreken ze booslijk van verdrukking: ze spreken uit de hoogte. Hun geld zullen ze hebben, al moet het slachtoffer onderdrukt worden. Arme rijke vrekken. Met hun grooten bek! Vrede hebben ze niet.

Doch het kan gebeuren, dat zulke rijke vrekken gewezen worden op den hemel, op God die alles ziet en hoort. Wat dan? Dan zullen ze hunne tong tegen den hemel zetten. God hoort het toch niet als mijn uitgemergelde slachtoffers schreien tot God! En hunne tong wandelt op de aarde. 't Zal waar zijn. God staan ze tegen; en den mensch ontrooven ze zijn bescheiden deel. Wie zou niet nijdig worden op dat soort menschen?

Toen Asaf dat soort menschen zag en van dat soort menschen veel moest lijden, toen is hem een volle beker waters uitgedrukt. Toen is Asaf gaan denken; Zou

God dit wel weten? Heeft God het niet alles gezien? Heeft God geen wetenschap van al die verachtelijke dingen? De arme schreit en de rijke schaterlacht: zijn tong wandelt op de aarde! Heere, ziet Gij het niet? Het zijn toch goddelooze menschen? Welnu, zij hebben rust! Ze worden al rijker!

En niet allen dat, doch, zegt Asaf, ik heb mijn hart gezuiverd van al die dingen die de rijken met graagte doen. Ik heb gestreden tegen mijn oude natuur en gewaakt tegen vrekheid en hoovaardij. Liever dan goud op goud te stapelen heb ik mijn inkomen in gerechtigheid gebruikt voor mij en voor de armen. En wat is het resultaat? Dit: Ik ben den ganschen dag geplagd en mijne straf is er alle morgens. Zoo gauw ik wakker word in den morgen, gevoel ik mijn tekort. Dat rijke, gemeene volk zondigt maar raak en zij hebben rust. Terwijl ik tegen de zonde strijd en smart ontvang. Is er wel wetenschap bij U, o God!?

(Geen wonder dat Asaf zichzelf een groot beest bij God noemt, later.)

En toch durft Asaf zulks niet te verkondigen aan Gods volk. Hij durft niet te leeraren: God vergeet de smart van Zijn volk en Hij heeft welbehagen om Zijn vijanden te zegenen. Zoo leeraarde Asaf niet. Het was wel moeite in zijn oogen; hij wilde het zoo gaarne begrijpen, doch hij brengt het niet op de straten van Askalon, of ook niet te Jeruzalem.

Dat doet de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk wel. Die zeggen: God heeft de goddeloozen lief en Hij zegent hun. Hij is goed aan Sodom! Daarom is Gods volk geërgerd. Doch Asaf doet het niet. Hij wil niet trouweloos worden aan het geslacht van Gods kinderen. Ontrouw is als men zijn gelofte niet gestand doet. Zijn belofte was om Gods volk te troosten. En als hij nu zeide: God is goed aan de goddeloozen en kwaad aan U, dan zou dat volk bitterlijk weenen. En dat mag niet.

Wat dan?

Asaf is van God geleerd. Hij gaat naar God met zijn problemen. Hij is ingegaan in Gods heiligdommen.

De heiligdommen Gods, wat zijn zij? Onze psalmberijmers hebben het juist gezien: "om met de Godspraak raad te plegen!"

Onder het verzoendeksel, in de ark des Verbonds lag het boek der Wet. Alleen Gods Woord is ons tot een gids en wegwijzer vanuit de duisternissen hier beneden.

Zijt niet nijdig op de dwazen!

Beklaagt hen. Want God zeide tot hen: Gij dwaas! Dezen nacht zal men Uw ziel van U afeischen. . . .

Geen rijkdom, Heere! En geen armoede!

Wat dan? Asaf zal het U later wel zeggen: Maar mij aangaande, het is mij goed nabij God te wezen. . .

Christianity In Japan

The original subject assigned to me for an article was really of a much more limited nature than the heading of this article indicates. I was to write on: Christianity in Japan Today. I dropped the word "Today". This gives me a somewhat broader field which seems preferable. By and large our readers very likely know little about Christianity in Japan at all, and it is therefore not out of place to tell about the coming and history of Christianity. Besides under present war conditions there is no information available regarding Christianity in Japan *today*. It is not improbable, yes it is in the light of history even likely, that Christianity (such as it is) is undergoing a severe period of trial and persecution in the Japanese homeland at this very time. However, we have no definite information regarding the present situation. With this in view I chose to write more in general about Christianity in Japan.

In writing upon this subject it is well to bear in mind that we are using the term "Christianity" in a very general and loose sense of the term. From the distance, and from statistics, it is quite difficult to discover just what percent of that called Christianity is really in any sense worthy of the name.

Its First Coming.

Christianity first came to Japan (in the form of Roman Catholicism), in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From the years 1492 to 1638 Japan's doors were open to the foreigner. Especially the Dutch and the Portuguese visited Japan and were the chief traders. The Dutch, however, were interested merely in trade; they made no attempt to send missionaries, Protestant missionaries, to Japan. Portugal was then, as now, a Catholic nation, and the Catholic church sent priests and nuns to Japan. First a few, later more, although at no time was it a great number that were sent as Catholic missionaries. These missionaries labored chiefly on the island of Kyushu (one of the four main islands of Japan and densely populated). They labored chiefly among the higher classes, and sought the influence of the feudal lords and chiefs. They were in a measure successful and succeeded in the course of the century to establish churches. There were at the most perhaps several hundred thousand Catholic converts. The Jesuit missionaries did not hesitate to make use of their doctrine of accommodation, and this no doubt helps to explain their success.

Persecution.

In 1638 the Tokugawa Shogunate, firmly intrenched in power, issued an edict that completely closed Japan to the outside world for the next few centuries.

No Japanese were allowed to leave Japan, no foreigner was allowed to enter Japan's harbors. The foreigners there were ordered home or put to death without mercy. The sole exception to this exclusion policy, and to Japanese isolation, was the permission granted the Dutch to maintain the privilege of entering the harbor of Nagasaki a few times of the year. The Dutch were the only ones who during these centuries of exclusion could gain any access to Japan at all. The foreign-religion, Christianity, also came under the ban. Various reasons may be adduced for this. First of all, the Tokugawa Shogunate wished to maintain and firmly secure unto itself its power. They saw that the foreigners were gaining political influence in other Oriental countries, and wished to forecome this. Christianity, coming from the foreigner, seemed to be a religion, therefore, that also ought to be banished, lest through it the foreigner gain influence. Secondly, the Jesuit missionaries interfered in Japanese local matters and so brought the wrath of the government upon themselves. Thirdly, the Buddhist priests had become antagonistic to Christianity, and used their influence against it. Fourthly, the communities where the Christian religion had a foothold were also those that had opposed the Tokugawa Shogunate's power of centralization of government.

At any rate a furious persecution broke out such as the world has rarely seen. It was so systematic, so complete, that it is unique in history. Ruthlessly Christians were compelled to recant or be killed. The Christian religion was not only forbidden; it was exterminated! Jesuit priests that failed to leave were killed or went into hiding till they died. Every month each town had to report whether there were any Christians there. Once a year every family head had to testify under oath before the local authorities that there were no Christians in his family or under his roof. Every few years there was a public cross-trampling in every town; a large cross (representative of Christ's cross) was marked on the ground and every citizen, old and young, compelled to trample on it or be killed. Many paid the supreme penalty. This persecution continued for over two hundred years! Yet, after Japan's re-opening in 1854, the Catholic church still found descendants of those early Catholics that had not entirely forgotten Catholicism. Naturally they knew little of Catholicism, but they had been taught to look for the coming of the foreign men in priest's apparel. It has been a marvel that even so much knowledge of Catholicism was maintained, for during the two hundred years after 1638 Japan persecuted every form and semblance of Catholicism with a ruthlessness the world has rarely seen.

Protestant Missions.

We are not Catholics. Roman Catholicism is a

great deviation from historic Christianity. In how far there were converts to Catholicism during those early years that were truly Christians, we do not know. The day of Christ will reveal it. But up to the latter part of the 19th century Roman Catholicism was the only form of Christianity with which Japan had any real contact. (It is not impossible that Japan had some contact with Nestorian Christianity through China. Certain factors in Amida Buddhism, etc., seem to show that there may have been some contact with Nestorian Christianity.)

Protestant mission work did not begin in Japan until only about seventy-five years ago. Prior to the outbreak of the present war it was still limited to the large populated centers, e.g. Tokyo, which has some two hundred Christian churches.

After the re-opening of Japan by Commodore Perry in 1854, the Tokugawa Shogunate fell and the new clan-heads in power opened up Japan to the outside world. First Japan was opened to trade—she was willing to open her ports to all except opium and Christianity. Later Christian missionaries were allowed. There was a rather remarkable influx of Christian missionaries. By 1920, according to Japanese government statistics, there were 2,360 Christian evangelists in Japan. Of these some 800 were foreign missionaries, the remainder Japanese trained evangelists. Yet considering that Japan had some 80,000,000 population, the number of nominal Christians is very, very small. It is only a fraction of the population. We quote from Toyohiko Kagawa's *Christ and Japan*, "Taking only the larger denominations into account, there are 160,000 Japanese Protestants. Even including the Roman Catholics, the total number of Christians scarcely reaches 300,000". The Reformed Church of America, the Reformed Church in the U. S., the Presbyterian Church U. S. A., the Baptists, are among those that maintain missions in Japan. There are mission schools, hospitals, etc. The converts formerly were members of denominations modeled after the home denominations of the missionaries. Just prior to the war these churches cut themselves loose from the foreign influence, and even merged into one Japanese denomination.

What To Think.

What must we think of the strength of Christianity in Japan today? That is a hard question to answer. It is an indisputable fact that many of the missionaries that went to Japan were imbued with the modernism that prevails in their denominations at home. Much of the Christianity is undoubtedly nothing but modernism and not worthy of the name Christianity. Even Kagawa himself, though Rev. Van Baalen has sought to maintain that he is a Christian, surely expresses himself in language that makes it hard to think of

this Japanese Christian leader as other than a modernist. Kagawa speaks of the brotherhood of men, the Fatherhood of God, the Kingdom of God etc., in exactly the same way as a modernist would. If you remember that counting all in all there are only 300,000 nominal Christians out of the approximate eighty millions of people; if you further remember that the 300,000 include Catholics and modernists,—then certainly there are not many out of Japan's hordes that can truly be called Christians.

What to think of the status of Christianity during the war? The foreign missionaries are either gone or imprisoned. The militaristic party in control of Japan is definitely antagonistic to Christianity in any form. (There can be no question of this. Korea's experience, China's experience etc., all point to this.) Very likely what Christianity there is, is undergoing a severe trial as being the religion of the foreign-enemy.

P. D. B.

The Value Of O. T. Revelation For The New Dispensation

In our former essay on this subject (See April 1 issue) we attempted to define the terms in our subject. In so doing we noticed the following:

In the first place, that "Old Testament" is not to be identified or confused with O.T. Scriptures. For "Testament" in our subject means covenant and refers to the relationship established between God and His people, while the "Scriptures" are the infallible record of this covenant.

Secondly, we observed, that "Testament" and "Dispensation" are also not identical. "Dispensation" in Holy Writ is the all-wise government and control of God the Father over all things in heaven and earth unto the realization of the plan of redemption and of His Covenant (testament) with man.

Thirdly, it was pointed out, that "old" is an epithet applicable to the all-wise and merciful dispensation of God *before* the coming of God's Son in the flesh. From the viewpoint of the present dispensation of God the former is "old," it has lost its force.

The above recapitulation will be sufficient to recall the trend of our former article.

We now stand before the question of the "value" of the Old Covenant ordinances for the believers after Pentecost. To this we would call your attention in this concluding article on this subject. We will strive for brevity and clarity. In doing so the following matters will need to be considered. 1. The Value that

the "Old Testament Revelation" had in the *Old Dispensation*. 2. Thus see by way of contrast the points in which this old Covenant still has value for us today.

Value Of The Old Testament For The

Old Dispensation

After careful and lengthy consideration of this question of the "present value" of the Old Covenant, we are convinced that the correct understanding of this matter hinges on the understanding of the relationship of "the Law" to "the Promise". These are two different yet mutually related entities in the Bible. Paul often discourses on this subject, the matter being an actual, burning question in his day. To understand this question, again we are called upon to define: 1. What Scripture understands by the "Promise." 2. What the Word of God understands by the "Law." 3. And then see how these two matters under the all-wise control and guidance and plan of God are mutually related and wherein they differ.

Just a word about the correctness of this approach may be in order here. However, those remarks could be reserved till after the discussion of the three propositions of the former paragraph too. But for pedagogical reasons permit me to make them here.

As shall, we trust, become evident presently in our discussion on the "Promise", the Promise is that which is the controlling factor in both the Old and New Dispensations. On Pentecost Peter preaches: For to you is the promise and to your children and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. Acts 2:39. Now if the promise is the same in the New Dispensation as it is in the Old Dispensation, then by seeing the value that the "law," "the old testament revelation" had for the "Promise" at once indicates its value for us today who are the "heirs of the promise." This reasoning and presupposition underlies the method of our treatment. Let the reader judge as to the correctness of this approach.

We believe that this is the method of reasoning followed by Paul in Galatians 3, and the one, which, upon due reflection all will concede, is necessitated by the fact that Christ is the end of the Law in being the fulfillment of the Promise.

Let us attend to this matter somewhat more in detail.

As stated before we must first of all call attention to the Scriptural idea and implication of the "Promise." We will here consider two matters.

First of all we ask: What is the *scope* and perspective of the Promise. We believe that it is plain teaching of Scripture that the Promise extends from the Protevangel in Gen. 3:15 to the final descent of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem from God, adorned as a bride to meet her husband. Rev. 21:2, 3. The Promise extends all the way. It is given to Abram in

Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. 12:1-3. The perspective opens here even to the dim future. It foresees that God shall justify the heathen-world through faith. Gal. 3:8. The numberless throng John may see in the vision as recorded in Rev. 7:9-17. Hence the promise extends all the way from Alpha to Omega. It finds its terminus ad quem in the Consummation of all things! Rev. 22.

Secondly there is the element of the certain realization of the Promise. This also is given in both Gen. 3:15 and Gen. 12:1-3. It is emphasized that *God will do it*. And again: That He will do what is *impossible with man!* Hence the Promise always implies the Miraculous! Foresooth, not the miraculous in the sense of the merely philosophically conceived supernatural, but as the wonder, the miracle of redemption. Hence the Promise always presupposes two factors: *Sin and grace!* God would lead many sons to glory. But in doing so He cannot deny Himself. He would bless all nations in Abraham. But who is Abraham? He is as far as the Seed is concerned dead. But God by the Wonder of Grace raises the dead to life and calls the things that are not as though they were. Rom. 4:13-25. For this Seed (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:7; 22:18; 24:7; Gal. 3:16) is the Christ of God. In this Christ the Promise is fulfilled, being delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. Rom. 4:23-25. For all God's promises are in Him yea, and, therefore also in Him Amen unto the glory of God. Such is the certainty of the Promises which spans the ages!

This is not an exhaustive treatment, for that would mean an exposition of the whole bible! For Scripture shows us the unfolding of God's council and the realization of the Promise in Christ. We merely wish to draw the line!

Now, what is the "Law?" Also here we must be clear in our conception. There are three laws of which the bible speaks. 1. The moral law, the ten commandments. 2. The civil law regulating the civil affairs in Israel. 3. The Ceremonial laws regulating the temple-worship.

We here have in mind the laws of the ceremonial ordinances. These were the laws that regulated the life of Israel to the minutest details. It designated the place of worship, (Jno. 4:20) the time when to worship (the entire lunar calendar regulating the feast) the distinction of clean and unclean, of foreigner and sons, circumcision and uncircumcision. It prescribed what might be eaten and what avoided. And in this all it said: Do this and thou shalt live.

As such the law pointed in two directions. It pointed on the one hand to the moral law in connection with the dead and guilty sinner. It came specifically to man as the guilty one. On the other hand it pointed toward redemption. It pointed toward the

Christ of the Promise! It was not something to supersede the promise. It indeed came later by the space of four hundred and thirty years. Gal. 3:17; Ex. 12:40.

Yet this law was weak. The miracle of redeeming love and grace it did not bring. It did the very opposite. It brought about a great burden which none of the fathers were able to carry. Matt. 11:28; Acts 15:6-11. It proclaimed the sinfulness of man without lifting the burden and carrying away the sin of the people. Jno. 1:29. If it had done so, it would have nullified the Promise. Gal. 3:21. But the *Promise* would bring salvation in the Seed, and not the law.

We are now in a position to see the relationship of the law to the Promise, as we stated earlier in this essay we would do. Let us notice two points in particular—points that have bearing on and are relevant to our subject.

The first point of importance is to see what the "Promise" and the "law" had in common. The following matters of agreement may be observed.

1. They both presuppose the sin and guilt of man. They both proclaim, altho each in his own way, that man is dead, impotent and rebellious. Neither one of them is conceivable without a world of sin. To remove a possible objection to speak of "conceivability," I wish to state that I take the position that revelation is not irrational, even though it is not the product of human reason.

2. Both also point to the need of salvation. The specific form of the temple, its architecture, symbolism, sacrifices, altar, candle-stick, holy of holies emphasize and reveal the way unto God. As such it may be said to complement the promise. It was something added to it also in revelational clarity. Moses in the desert saw the outline of the Promise to Abraham. Both "Law" and "Promise" therefore deal with the same subject.

Yet there is a vast difference between these two. We call attention to the following:

1. The "law" pointed to sin, pointed it out emphatically, and even appended the malediction to it, without being able to take sin away. The Promise also sees the full reality of sin and death and takes it away.

2. The Promise by taking away sin and bringing satisfaction removes the guilt and the ground of condemnation, and, that on the accursed tree in Jesus. And so it removes the *curse* of the law. And the function of the law as taskmaster to Christ is ended. Therefore the temple-veil is rent from top to bottom in the giving of the Ghost by Christ. Matt. 27:51.

Value Of The Old Testament Revelation For The New Dispensation

To the underlying connection between the two

dispensations we have called attention above. We need therefore not tarry and call attention to this once more.

However, we must now face the question: What is the value of the "Law" this O.T. Revelation today? In attempting to answer this question we wish to point out two matters. The first is possibly the easier of the two. This first matter is to state in how far the "law" has *no* value for us today. After having eliminated the elements which have no value, we will be in a better position to state the value that the "Old Testament revelation" *does have*.

In compliance with the requisites that we have set ourselves we would answer to the former of these matters as follows: 1. We have stated in this essay that the law pointed toward the irrevocable demands of God's holiness in connection with the guilty sinner, and damning him to deepest hell. This element is still in the law. But it now can no longer touch the heirs of the promise because their guilt has been removed. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:1. Its value as the actual taskmaster to Christ is ended. Gal. 4:1-7. Jerusalem, Sarah and her children are free. Gal. 4:21-31. 2. The value of pointing to the Christ as the one to come is also gone. God has rent it. Melchisedec's priesthood is of a higher order than that of Aaron. When Christ said "It is finished," forevermore the "old Testament Revelation" of the Christ must make room for the reality. The fulfillment of the Promise is the abrogation of the Laws contained in ordinances. Eph. 2:13-17. In Him the handwriting that was against us is nailed to the cross. Col. 2:13, 14. The law can no longer point out the "one that is to come."

But what is now left? A dead relic? Merely some information of historic (?) interest? This is the impression that one sometimes receives in hearing men speak about the "value" of O.T. Revelation. But this is far from the truth.

As I understand the matter there are two points of "value" in the O.T. Revelation for us today.

The first of these is that it still has "revelational Value"! It has this because it contributed something to the unfolding idea of the Promise. The very terms, symbols, phraseology employed in the O.T. law are employed in the N.T. Revelation and without them we cannot possibly form N.T. conceptions of the work of redemption. Witness to this is the entire book of Hebrews. Read it and assure yourself. Or think of the book of Revelation. The O.T. revelation contains the vocabulary of the Spirit of Truth, plus His symbols in numbers, colors, figures etc. The scenes cast upon the screen before John on Patmos are all taken from the "Mileau" of the O.T. revelation under the law as related to the Promise. They all form the elements of our N.T. thinking. And so it is.

men's imagination must fail.

It also has *spiritual-pedagogical* value. This should be evident to us when we read the practical admonitions directed to the believers in the book of Hebrews. This is also true of other books, but emphatically this is the case there. Read such passages as Heb. 2:1-5; 4:1, 2; 10:26-31; 12:29. And lest men should use their new testament liberty as an occasion for the flesh (Gal. 5:13) Paul cites the examples of Israel's unbelief and what happened to them under the law in the desert. I Cor. 10:1-13. These things were written as examples for us upon whom the ends of the ages have come, and that for our admonition lest we be led away by our desires. The most powerful motives for holy conduct even now are elicited by the apostles from the Old Testament revelation!

We do well to heed this truth. To the law and prophets lest there be no dawn for us.

One remark in conclusion. The writer would welcome a discussion on some theological club meeting on this subject. Possibly there is much in this essay that is not clear. For this the writer makes no apology. The subject is indeed as involved as it is important to christian thinking and life!

G. L.

The Beauty Of The Young Woman

The rush to the beauty parlor!

I realize that I expose myself to a vigorous attack from the young women when we begin to make comment on their beauty. I have heard of people who have been put to flight by the daggered looks of certain young women, when they made comments on their beauty. Somehow, however, if you put it in print the immediate danger is not so great, neither do you need to witness the reaction.

I could hardly say, without more, that it is wrong to visit the beauty parlors, for I should not want to be understood as favoring slouchiness and unkempt appearance in our young women. Paul does speak of the fact that "if a woman have long hair it is glory to her" but he does not say how long it should be, other than that "her hair is given her for a covering." Neither does the Scripture forbid our young women to keep themselves beautiful, that is neat and tidy of appearance, and there are several of the women in Scripture concerning whom it says that they were beautiful.

But there are in this connection a few things which might be well to consider when you make, or

if you make, your next trip to the beauty parlors.

First of all I believe Scripture warns us against making beauty our god. Remember that that is just what the worldly young women are always doing. They dream of but one aspiration, and that is to be beautiful in that outward and glamorous sense of the word. And that is making of beauty their god. You realize that it is alright to own money, but sinful when it turns into a Mammon; it is alright to eat and drink but sinful when, to use Paul's words, their belly becomes their god. In like vein, comeliness and beauty are in place and to be received with thanksgiving, provided they keep their God-ordained place and you assume the God ordained attitude toward them. That is difficult. If, consequently, our young women have but one ideal and that is to adorn themselves with external beauty, I feel sure that your beauty has become your sin and your repeated trips to the beauty parlor are proof of the fact that your god is enthralling you more and more. The more you revel in that beauty the more you glory in your shame. Even the people of the world feel a little of this misplaced emphasis when they speak of "dumb but beautiful;" and some time ago men staged a current-opinion-poll when the question was, "do you know any glamour girls that are intelligent?" You see, even the world feels that girls frequently give up everything else, their reading and studying etc. and dream only of attaining to glamour and cultivate the "it." That is an example of mis-placed emphasis. If this is so true that even the world feels it, how much wiser should not the children of light be? Make the most of the beauty God gave you for beauty itself is not sinful, but to dote on beauty, as if that is the paramount thing, that is sinful and just at that point world conformity begins. The Scripture would say, "Be moderate, be sober and adorn yourself with modesty."

I used the word world-conformity because the way of the glamour-girls is that they live only to be beautiful and, in turn, they want to be beautiful in order to attract, and they want to attract because they are SENSUAL. I make no accusations! But the women of the world race to the beauty parlors because they are sensual, fornicators, adulterers, coquettish, flapperish and, knowing what power such beauty has on the opposite sex, they employ their tactics to attract as many to themselves as they can. Their rush to the beauty parlor therefore comes up out of a heart which is sensual. I do not say that you go there impelled by that sensual heart, I said, that way the world goes there, and, if we will be children of God we shall carefully have to ask ourselves: why do I want to beautify myself?

Be not conformed but be transformed. Also in this matter.

God is not mocked. God looks past your make-up and scrutinizes the heart. Why those horrid, painted nails, those red lips? That isn't even beauty! It is proof that your sense of beauty is dulled by the urge of a sensual heart. Be tidy, be neat, be comely, but surely we should know moderation and limits. When Scripture exhorts to moderation and sobriety (Titus 2:4) it applies here as everywhere else and I feel sure that it condemns the outrages we see in many young women today and sometimes also young women of the church. It sends a chill down the minister's spine when he looks over his audience and sees painted lips, dyed cheeks, claw-hammered finger-nails, equally garnished. They who do these things have fallen into excess and have forgotten moderation. They manifest that they are sensual and that is world-conformity against which Scripture repeatedly warns us all. Be sober, be moderate.

You find beauty-worship from the beginning of history. It is rather interesting to find that in all the early genealogies of Gen. 4 and 5 you find but three women mentioned. All three of these appear in the line of the worldly ones. They are: Adah, Zillah and Naamah (Gen. 4:19 and 22). Their names are mentioned. Names had meaning at that time and I doubt not but that their very names expressed their being. Adah means: beautiful or adorned; Zillah means: to twitter and Naamah means: graceful or pleasant (mother of gods, in Phoenic). All three of these names express that this generation laid emphasis on the carnal and sensual, coming to the surface plainly in Lamech's polygamy. You may find other passages of Scripture that speak of this excess of women, such as Isa. 3:16 and Ezek. 23:40. Jezebel also "attired herself" and looked out of the window to allure Jehu by her vain beauty; and Esther too relied on her beauty to infatuate Ahasuerus. But Scripture condemns this all when it tells mothers to teach their daughters to be sober and moderate and dress with "modest apparel" (I Tim. 2:9).

The second thing we should consider is that true womanly beauty is not something which can be purchased at drug stores or obtained at the beauty parlors. The true beauty, says Peter, lies in the heart, a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. You see, that is God's evaluation of beauty and who does not want to be beautiful before God? It is already a sign of carnality when we want to be beautiful only before men. It is world-conformity when our beauty is intended only to attract the eyes of the people. Peter speaks of the true sense of beauty when he remarks of beauty "in the sight of God," the beauty which God likes to see.

That beauty cannot be smeared or dabbed or painted on, it cannot be obtained by means of curlers or make-ups, but it is a gift of God in Christ Jesus. The

renewal of the heart is the beginning of all beauty. By nature we are all ugly. At best we are but a handful of dust. But God is beautiful, He is Graceful, He is Attractive and it pleased God to make His people beautiful with His Grace. God makes us conform to the image of His dear and Beautiful Son.

The young woman's beauty begins in regeneration.

Just therefore Scripture exhorts the woman to adorn herself with this beauty, that is, let the beauty of that regenerate heart show itself in your walk, conduct and manner of life.

And then it exhorts three things:

First of all in I Tim. 2:9 Paul emphasizes that one of these beauty requisites is "to adorn themselves with shamefacedness." The word shamefacedness means, deep reverence and modesty, an attitude of heart which prevents them from committing any shameful act. The opposite of this true beauty is mentioned in Jer. 3:5 when it says: "Thou hast a whore's forehead, thou refusest to be ashamed." It is often said of women that they have no shame left and generally their very faces tell you that. The christian young woman ought to let her very face tell others that she is born again, that she despises the sensual and entertains deep reverence for the things that are pure, chaste and holy. When she shows this reverence by her conduct she has become beautiful, "in the sight of God". . . and who shall judge of beauty than God?

A second beauty requisite is, "A meek and quite spirit." No doubt Scripture wants the young woman to remember that sin came into the world through Eve, the woman. That woman was in transgression, says Paul, that woman deceived the man in Paradise and therefore she must be "In silence." The woman can be saved, indeed, but, "In childbearing, if they continue in faith, charity, holiness with sobriety" (I Tim. 2:11-15). Shall the woman therefore vaunt herself, shall she conduct herself as if she were a gorgeous creature and walk about in glamour and pride? No, let her remember that the woman deceived the man in Paradise and in consequence let her be humble, meek and quiet. That is her beauty. . . let her obey her husband and in general assume the position towards the man which God has appointed. That is her beauty.

Finally, says the Scripture, let the woman "cosmetic" (adorn, I Tim. 2:9) themselves with good works. Distinctly Paul emphasizes that their cosmetics must not be sensual material such as brodered hair, gold and pearls (I Pet. 3:3) but let your beauty be the good works of Jesus Christ (I Tim. 2:10). Paul says that "that becometh women professing godliness" i.e. it belongs to the wardrobe of the christian young woman. Adorn yourself with it, for that is true beauty.

Grieving The Spirit

In Ephesians 4:30 the apostle writes to the church, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Although Scripture does not elsewhere speak of "grieving the Spirit" in so many words, the idea is expressed more often in somewhat similar terms. In Isaiah 63:10 we read, "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." In the above passage the word "vexed" may also be translated "grieved." Other passages do not single out the holy Spirit but refer to the triune God as being grieved. In Psalm 78:40 the psalmist declares, "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness and grieve him in the desert!" In Psalm 95:10 the Lord Himself declares through the mouth of the psalmist, "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways." And again in the same connection, with a view to the same historical incident, this verse is quoted literally in Heb. 3:10, while in verse 17 of this same chapter the writer to the Hebrews adds, "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?" And finally it is said of the Lord Himself in Gen. 6:6, "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart."

This latter passage may be excluded as far as the practical significance of our subject is concerned. However, it adds emphasis to the question which naturally arises in the consideration of our subject: *How must it be explained that God can be grieved?* Essentially it makes no difference whether one speaks of grieving the holy Spirit or of grieving God. The holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity and therefore truly God. And what affects the holy Spirit must necessarily affect the triune God. The difference pertains not to the grieving as such but to the mode of this grieving. However, as far as the above mentioned question is concerned, it makes no difference whether we speak of grieving the holy Spirit or of grieving God, as is evident from the fact that Scripture speaks of both.

The question how God can be grieved and wherein that divine grief consists is by no means a simple one and is not to be answered in an off-hand way. The question is certainly worthy of serious thought. Moreover, the more one attempts to find a solution, the more problems seem to arise. Hence, we would not even for one moment contend, nor would we have the reader think that any solution which we may offer is to be considered the final word on the sub-

ject. It would not be difficult to show that any solution which might be offered still leaves room for many questions, questions that are difficult to answer.

One's first inclination, when faced by this question, is perhaps to explain it by simply saying that God is grieved just as we are. However, one immediately realizes that this will not do. For God is God! He is not a man that He should be subject to affliction, sorrow, grief or disappointment. Man may suffer loss but God cannot suffer loss. Man may suffer a wound either in his body or in his heart but God cannot be wounded. God is certainly, as far as these things are concerned, the Untouchable One. He is that because He is absolutely Sovereign and Independent. He is in no sense of the word dependent upon His creatures. We cannot enrich Him, we cannot impoverish Him. We cannot add to His glory, we cannot detract from it. We cannot increase His blessedness nor can we decrease it. He is in Himself the ever blessed God. He is highly exalted above all that He has made and dwells in everlasting perfection. We are affected by time, condition and circumstance and our joy or sorrow depends largely upon them. This is not so however with the Lord. He is Himself, as the Sovereign, Independent and Infinite God, the source of all His perfect life and blessedness. Hence it must be clear that, from this point of view, we cannot speak of grief in respect to God. It is impossible that God, Who is truly God, should ever suffer grief as we are caused to bear it.

Someone might suggest that this "grieving" does not have the same meaning when applied to the holy Spirit or to God as it does when applied to man. In the first place, the question arises, what meaning would it have then when applied to God? However it is evident, in the second place, that this same word is used in the original in both instances. In the texts which we have quoted above the original uses more than one word for "grieved." Yet, in every instance, we find that the same word is used with a view to man's grief also. And, when in Ephesians 4:30 we are admonished to "*grieve* not the holy Spirit," the original renders the word "grieve" as, "to make sorrowful, to affect with sadness, cause grief, to throw into sorrow." Hence we find no solution here.

Most commentaries explain the expression as an anthropomorphism. Rather than to explain the term, we quote Barnes' Notes where the idea is clearly expressed. He says, "We are not to suppose that the Holy Spirit literally endures *grief* or *pain*, at the conduct of men. The language is such as is fitted to describe what *men* endure, and is applied to him to denote that kind of conduct which is *fitted* to cause grief; and the meaning here is, 'do not pursue such a course as is *fitted* in its own nature, to pain the benevolent heart of a holy being. Do not act towards

the Holy Spirit in a manner which would produce pain in the bosom of a friend who loves you' ". Our objection to this view is that it does not do justice to the expression. Although it has significance for the believer, it nevertheless does not answer to any reality in God. When Scripture speaks anthropomorphistically of God's hand or eye, there is an actual reality suggested. Here however, that is not true.

The editor of the Standard Bearer, in one of his meditations, gives another interpretation, (See Vol. 7 No. 19). He presents the view that, although the holy Spirit as the third person of the holy trinity cannot suffer and endure grief, this is not the case with the holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ in the Church. He says, (we translate from the Holland, H.D.W.), "As the Son of God could suffer, not in the divine nature but in the human nature, so can the holy Spirit as the Spirit of and in the church of Christ, be grieved." Whether this view can be maintained in the face of all the questions that arise, is yet to be seen. Personally we are convinced that it can stand a great deal of elucidation and is worthy of being further developed. We are attracted to this interpretation because it holds that this grieving is a reality not only with a view to him who grieves but also the holy Spirit Who is grieved. Whereas the anthropomorphistical view must necessarily deny any reality at all with a view to this grief on the part of the holy Spirit, the above mentioned view retains the basic implication that the holy Spirit can actually suffer, although not as the third person of the trinity but as the Spirit of Christ in the Church. In this light "the grieving" answers to a reality in God. Hence, when we become guilty of grieving the Spirit, we are not simply doing something that ordinarily would cause someone to suffer but actually does not affect the Spirit, but we are actually causing the holy Spirit to suffer; He is actually afflicted by our mis-conduct. Nevertheless, it is a question whether the analogy which the editor makes between the Son of God in the human nature and the holy Spirit in the Church will actually hold. With a view to the former, there is an actual union of the divine and human natures. The Son of God actually assumed the human nature and He became true man. And although it was truly the Son of God that suffered, He nevertheless bore His suffering and endured His grief in His own personal human nature which He had assumed. With a view to the Holy Spirit in the church, the case is different. Although He has been poured out in the Church and actually dwells in the heart of the individual believer, although He bears witness with our spirit and even prays for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, He nevertheless remains exclusively divine in His nature. He does not, as did the Son of God, enter into a Personal union with the human nature. He does

not possess a Personal human nature in which He can suffer. And therefore, unless the above reasoning is incorrect, the question as to wherein this grief consists, still remains, and especially so in the light of Genesis 6:6 where we read of God that "it grieved Him at His heart".

There are also other questions that persist. And although we feel that it would be beneficial to reason "out loud" and "on paper" space will not permit in this instance. Moreover, we are not prepared to give a solution that is satisfactory in every respect. We are convinced however that the solution must not be sought by anthropomorphistically explaining the difficulty away. We believe that this grieving does in some way answer to an actual reality in God. We also suggest that, in the light of the last mentioned view, there is a third possibility, namely, to explain this grieving in a relative sense. Although in the absolute sense of the word God cannot suffer and endure grief because He is the most blessed God forever and ever, isn't it possible that in a relative sense God can actually suffer grief with a view to a certain relationship which He has sovereignly assumed with a view to His creature and, more particularly, His people? And isn't it possible that God can suffer with a view to a specific relationship without it actually affecting Him in His divine Being so as to cause Him to suffer loss, just because He is the Sovereign, Independent One? And doesn't this seem the more possible in the light of the fact that, in every instance in which this grieving of God or the Holy Spirit is mentioned in Scripture, a very definite relationship with His creature is implied; and also in the light of the fact that all things, even sin, is made to serve the purpose of God's eternal glory? How else can we explain God's wrath and displeasure? If we hold to the fact that God is God we shall have to confess that God is pleased in His displeasure, paradoxical though this may seem.

We had intended to say something about the practical significance of this grieving of the Spirit. However, also here, space will not permit. We shall be content therefore if our writing has served in some small way to cause the reader to think about this deep spiritual reality. And so much more so if it might result in a clearer understanding of this thing which God has revealed concerning Himself. H. D. W.

— NOTICE —

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids hereby wishes to notify the Churches that Synod will meet D.V. on Wednesday June 7, 1944. The Pre-Synodical sermon will be preached on the previous evening at 7:45 by the President of the Synod of 1943, Rev. G. Vos.

C. Stonehouse, Clerk.

Christianity And Paganism After Constantine

As we saw, in the first three centuries of our Christian era, the Christians were intermittently persecuted. "All the pains, which iron and steel, fire and sword, rack and cross, wild beasts and beastly men could inflict," were employed to terrorize God's people into denying the name of Christ. But, so we saw, in 323 Constantine, the first Christian occupant of the throne of the Ceasars, became the sole ruler of the Roman world, and the church was everywhere free from its enemies. Constantine ordered the governors in all the provinces to restore all confiscated property to the body of Christians at the expense of the imperial treasury, and placed Christianity on a full legal equality with any religion of the Roman world. Heathen sacrifice was forbidden. The clergy were freed from the obligation of paying taxes to the state; and the church was granted the right to receive legacies.

Let us now notice the condition of Christianity and that of paganism from 313 on to 500. Constantine continued to favor the church. In a general exhortation he urged all his subjects to embrace the Christian religion. Under his patronage and favor the church grew by leaps and bounds in numbers and soon found itself fabulously rich in earthly goods. As was pointed out in a previous article, he granted the church the right to receive gifts of money by a last will. He gave to the church the depleted heathen temples and their estates and the confiscated property of heretics. Wealthy subjects of his realm, following his example, bequeathed their property on the church. The result was that the church, that is, the higher clergy, thus not the lower clergy and the laymen—became enormously rich.

A great many of the pagan nobles of the empire adopted the religion of their sovereign, Constantine, and of the court. But many others of the heathen cultured classes held themselves aloof and clung to their gods.

When Constantine died his vast empire was apportioned among his three sons, Constantine II, Constans, and Constantia. Three years later, the brothers engaged in a bloody war for supremacy and the result was that Constantius became the sole emperor and reigned until his death (353-361).

Constantine was intolerant of pagan religion. He spoiled and destroyed many temples and gave treasures to the church or to his favorites. He forbade, under pain of death, all sacrifices and image worship in Rome, Alexandria, and Athens. But this emperor, who was a fanatical Arian and thus a heretic, was equally intolerant of the adherents to true orthodoxy

as attaining expression in the Nicene creed and punished them with confiscation and banishment.

This is not the place for the discussion of the question whether such violent suppression of idolatry by the civil magistrate is, in the light of Scripture, a duty. Athanasias apparently didn't think so. For he says, "Satan, because there is no truth in him breaks with axe and sword. But the Saviour is gentle, and forces no one, to whom he comes, but knocks and speaks to the soul: Open to me my sister? If we open to him He enters; but if we will not, he departs. For the truth is not preached by sword and dungeon, by the might of an army, but by persuasion and exhortation."

As a result of this policy of suppression, the heathen, in great crowds, come over to Christianity, though not of course as moved by true principle. This opinion must be taken for what it is—an opinion. Besides the policy of Constantius could not be carried out and the pagan religion continued to flourish and retain an important influence through literature and the schools of pagan philosophy and, under the new emperor—Julian, surnamed the apostate, a nephew of Constantine the great and cousin of Constantinius—it once more strove to rehabilitate itself in the Roman empire.

Julian hated Christianity to begin with. But the tragic experiences of his youth and early manhood must certainly have had a great deal to do with his energetic opposition to the religion of Christ during the years of his occupancy of the throne. He was only six years old when his uncle died. In the war of Constantine's sons, his kindred was slaughtered and he looked upon Constantius as the murderer of his father. He himself was spared on account of his youth and he ascribed his escape to the favor of the old gods. He received a Christian training under the supervision of an Arian bishop and was baptized. Thus his training was, after all, basically pagan. Though in his heart he hated everything his tutors presented, and was filled with love for the culture of Hellenism, he prayed, fasted and read the scriptures in the church like a good Christian. Actually therefore he was not an "apostate" in the sense of a turncoat.

G. M. O.

(To be continued)

ATTENTION — Ministers!

The task has been assigned to the Stated Clerk of Classis East to see to it that all of our ministers, who have taken a classical examination, shall receive Classical Diploma, filled out and signed by the proper officials. Those who are entitled to one, please notify the undersigned.

D. Jonker
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